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11 November 1971

NSC review completed

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Guidance and Instructions for U.S. Mission

REFERENCE: CAS Saigon Cable of 2 November 1971

"WHITE HOUSE HAS REQUESTED WE TRANSMIT FOLLOWING  
TEXT AS U.S. MISSION PRESS GUIDANCE IN EVENT OF [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] PRISONER EXCHANGE:

"MATTER OF U.S. PRESS LINE IN EVENT OF PRISONER  
RELEASE/EXCHANGE ARRANGED [REDACTED] HAS  
BEEN CAREFULLY REVIEWED HERE.

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"IN OUR VIEW THE FOLLOWING INTERESTS WOULD SEEM  
IMPORTANT: (A) PROTECTING THE CHANNEL, (B) AVOID RAISING  
POW FAMILY HOPES UNDULY AND (C) PROTECTING IDENTITY [REDACTED]

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"WITH THESE INTERESTS IN MIND, FOLLOWING PRESS  
GUIDANCE, WHICH HAS NSC CONCURRENCE, OFFERED FOR USE  
IN EVENT EXCHANGE MATERIALIZES:

DPMO review(s) completed.

State Dept. review completed

SECRET [REDACTED]

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"A. RELEASE [REDACTED]

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WILL OBVIOUSLY BECOME KNOWN. WE SHOULD, THEREFORE, ACKNOWLEDGE RELEASE OF VC MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO PORTRAY IT AS A RESPONSE TO RELEASE OF AMERICAN(S) RATHER THAN AS PART OF PRE-ARRANGED BARGAIN. IN THIS CONNECTION, MISSION COULD REFER TO PAST VC RELEASES WHICH HAVE ALWAYS MET WITH SIMILAR RESPONSES FROM OUR SIDE.

"B. FURTHER DETAILS OF EXCHANGE SHOULD NOT BE DIVULGED. SPECIFICALLY, IDENTITY OF ANY COMMUNIST PRISONERS SHOULD NOT BE DESCRIBED BY REAL NAME, FUNCTION OR PRESUMED IMPORTANCE.

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"C. [REDACTED] PERSONNEL SHOULD BE ADVISED TO PLEAD IGNORANCE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR RELEASE IN ORDER TO AVOID HARMING THE CHANCES OF THOSE STILL IN COMMUNIST CAPTIVITY.

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SECRET/ [REDACTED]

"D. FINALLY, WE SHOULD EXPRESS HOPE  
THERE WILL BE FURTHER RELEASES BUT PLACE  
ONUS SQUARELY ON OTHER SIDE TO RESPOND TO  
HUMANITARIAN APPROACH OF OUR SIDE AND  
REPEATED GESTURES OF GOOD WILL SUCH AS  
UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF CLOSE TO 3,000 VC  
POW'S ON OCCASION OF NATIONAL DAY."

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SECRET